

VZCZCXYZ0007
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHWN #0294/01 0451931
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 141931Z FEB 06
FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1865
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1372
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL
RUEHCV/USDAO CARACAS VE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 000294

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR AND DS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/14/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [GJ](#) [XL](#)
SUBJECT: GRENADA: MORE UNFOUNDED COUP RUMORS

REF: A. 04 BRIDGETOWN 2415
[1](#)B. 04 PORT OF SPAIN 1767

Classified By: Ambassador Mary Kramer, for reasons 1.4 (b and d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: After weeks of hurried phone calls and circumspect hints that something unspecified was about to happen in Grenada, Prime Minister Keith Mitchell finally confided to the Ambassador during a face-to-face meeting in December that he feared opposition politicians were out to change Grenada's democratic system of government. Mitchell claimed that remnants of the leftist People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) and their supporters (allegedly with criminal ties) were looking for an opportunity to return Grenada to one-party rule. Diligent investigation by Embassies Grenada and Bridgetown failed to turn up any credible evidence of a coup in the offing. It is likely that the PM's scaremongering was motivated by an attempt to consolidate his own position domestically after a failed attempt to discredit a popular opposition politician. End summary.

Fragile Polity?

[1](#)2. (C) After weeks of cryptic phone messages left by his press officer and desultory attempts to meet face-to-face with the Ambassador, Grenada Prime Minister Keith Mitchell finally confided to the Ambassador during a December meeting that he feared opposition politicians were out to change Grenada's democratic system of elected government. The PM claimed that the opposition politicians, who were members of the leftist PRG, along with supporters who had criminal ties, were looking for an opportunity to unseat him and his ruling New National Party in order to run the country unilaterally. The Ambassador pledged that Embassy staff, including the RSO, would investigate the situation and report back to her.

The Enforcers See Little Threat

[1](#)3. (C) After meeting with a number of senior GOG security officials, including Acting Commissioner of the Royal Grenadian Police Force (RGPF) Winston James, RGPF Special Branch Head Anthony DeGale, and National Security Advisor Nestor Ogilvie, Grenada Principal Officer and Bridgetown RSO reached the conclusion that there is no threat of a coup taking place in Grenada in the foreseeable future.

[1](#)4. (C) Special Branch Head DeGale observed that coup rumors tend to resurface every October, the anniversary month of the 1983 U.S.-led intervention that removed the PRG from power.

DeGale argued that Grenada's Constitution has provisions in place to protect against a coup. In addition, there are agreements within the Regional Security System (RSS), of which Grenada is a member, to deploy troops to restore order and provide assistance to member states. (Note: The RSS deployed to Grenada immediately after Hurricane Ivan in September 2004 when local police proved ineffective. End Note.) DeGale, like many Grenadians, believes the United States would ultimately "call the shots" should any threats to stability arise. In the event of a coup, he said the USG would likely impose sanctions against an unlawful government, thereby weakening it.

15. (C) National Security Adviser Ogilvie, a native of Grenada who served in the Jamaica Defence Force after being trained in England (Grenada not having a defence force), is confident that there is no threat of a coup; he believes any change in government will happen through legal means. Ogilvie speculated that if the opposition National Democratic Congress were to come to power through an election, it would not produce a noticeable difference in policy nor would it threaten constitutional rule.

Comment

16. (C) The hothouse atmosphere of Grenada politics seems to lend itself to periodic rumors of coup plots. Following the devastation caused by Hurricane Ivan in September 2004, PM Mitchell warned that elements on the island were threatening to take advantage of the situation and overthrow his government (reftels). Although the opposition has failed to capitalize on the GOG's lackluster performance in the aftermath of the hurricane, opposition leader Peter David has recently emerged stronger after the ruling party's campaign to disqualify him from his status as an MP backfired. (Note: The question as to whether David's status as a dual national (Grenada/Canada) disqualifies him from being elected to the House of Representatives is now in the courts. End note.) With a parliamentary majority of one seat, the government is likely anxious about its level of popular support. PM Mitchell may therefore believe that one way to shore up his government's image locally is to be seen with the protective arm of the USG draped over his shoulders.
KRAMER